

Lincolnshire officials want to partner with Buffalo Grove as they plan for Milwaukee Avenue project

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Lincolnshire officials now want to work with neighboring Buffalo Grove on possible improvements to Milwaukee Avenue, a major thoroughfare and commercial corridor that runs through both towns.

After reviewing options April 12, Lincolnshire Village Board members directed staff to seek a partnership with Buffalo Grove on a possible grant from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning to help fund a widening project along Milwaukee Avenue, said Village President Liz Brandt said.

Officials previously were thinking about planning for the project this year on their own, she said.

"It really wasn't that in-depth of a discussion because the choice was, do we go ahead right now on our own as just Lincolnshire or do we partner with Buffalo Grove because they have a small portion of the corridor?" Brandt said. "So, the board decided to go for the grant and wait until 2018."

The move comes after the Illinois Department of Transportation presented preliminary plans to the Lincolnshire board on the potential options to widen Milwaukee Avenue, Brandt said. Lincolnshire will be required to pay for a portion of any plan, which may include upgrades to street lighting and other costs, she said.

Board members reached a consensus on the partnership with Buffalo Grove after looking at their planning options.

"We felt, what's the difference of six to nine months?" she said. "If we can get a grant, we can partner. We can coordinate, since we're neighbors. There is cost efficiency to it. So, it makes sense."

Lincolnshire still plans to lead the project.

Board members directed Adam Letendre, assistant village manager and community and economic development director for Lincolnshire, to reach out to CMAP for assistance with the corridor study, as well as Buffalo Grove officials about the grant application, Letendre said.

Lincolnshire has until the end of June to apply for the grant with CMAP, which is expected to select eligible projects in October, Letendre said.

Depending on the project's specific needs, the actual planning process would begin in January, he said.

Lincolnshire already has started preparing the potential widening project by leaving room along the road for utility improvements and decorative light stands, as well as pedestrian paths, Brandt said.

Before choosing to seek a grant, Lincolnshire had budgeted \$65,000 for the project, she said. Officials have talked about the widening of Milwaukee Avenue since Brandt was first elected to the board as a trustee in 2001, she said.

"We've been discussing improvements and the widening of Milwaukee Avenue for at least that long," Brandt said. "I'm not sold that (the project) will happen in the next couple of years, but we'll see."

Milwaukee Avenue spans two miles and fronts 600 acres of commercial, residential, office and mixed-use properties as it passes through Lincolnshire, village officials said.

If Lincolnshire works through CMAP, the agency would fund 80 percent of the cost and the village would fund the remaining 20 percent, Letendre said.

The potential partnership with Buffalo Grove also makes sense for officials there, Brandt said.

"It doesn't make sense for them to spend a lot of money either," she said. "They don't have much square footage on Milwaukee. Yet, it is a benefit to have a contiguous, thought-out plan."

Phil Rockrohr is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.